



NEWS RELEASE

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Missouri Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces Public Meeting: The Impact of Community and Police Interactions on Individual Civil Rights in Missouri

St. Louis, Missouri – The Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a series of panel discussions to examine police and community interactions, and the extent to which disparities in the use of force may persist on the basis of race or color.

The meeting will take place on Monday February 23, 2015, from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm in the Auditorium of the J.C. Penny Conference Center at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1 University Drive, St. Louis, MO 63121. The meeting is open to the public. Closed captioning will be provided. To request other accommodations please contact the Midwest Regional Office at least 10 days prior to the meeting at (312)353-8311.

The shooting death of unarmed teenager Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, MO, on August 9, 2014, was one in a series of events that sparked national protests and widespread concern about police use of force throughout the country, particularly in communities of color. While this conversation is not new, these events have returned the topic to the forefront of national conversation. Of concern to the Committee is the extent to which disparities may persist in law enforcement practices that undermine equal protection under the law on the basis of race or color. Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro stated: “I commend our Missouri State Advisory Committee for focusing on this important issue. I look forward to attending the Public Meeting and hearing first hand the important testimony of Missourians as the Commission prepares for our upcoming national briefing on the topic of police use of deadly force.”

The Committee will hear testimony from community members, law enforcement, government officials, and experts in the field of community and police relations. Members of the public will also be invited to speak during two open forum sessions beginning at 12:00pm and 4:15pm. The Committee plans to hold a follow up meeting in Kansas City, MO later in the year, and will also accept written testimony submitted to Melissa Wojnaroski at mwojnaroski@usccr.gov. The Committee will issue its findings and recommendations in a report to the Commission after the conclusion of these events. Dr. S. David Mitchell, Chair of the Missouri Advisory Committee, urged community participation: “In the wake of the tragic events in Ferguson, MO and other incidents around the country, it is clear that there is a fundamental problem of trust and understanding between communities, especially communities of color, and law enforcement. The Committee hopes that if you are unable to attend in person that you will take time to provide comments during the notice and comment period for if we are to truly have real and longstanding change then the voices of all Missourians must be heard.”

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with studying and advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. Regional

Programs Unit Chief for the Commission, Dr. David Mussatt said, “Since 1957, the Commission’s state advisory committees have served as the eyes and ears for the Commission in the states. The Missouri Advisory Committee looks forward to seeing and hearing what the diverse panelists and the people of Missouri present regarding this issue of national importance.”

For information about the reports and meetings of the Commission and its State Advisory Committees, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.

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